lost to the Masai as a watering place. Situated at an altitude of 4,000 feet it is flanked on the east by the Kikuyu Escarpment, and on the north-west by Mount Suswa. Water is not procurable during the dry season, but the area is used by the Masai during the rains when most of the available water then runs to waste. [133]

The country between the Kedong Valley and the Uaso Nyiro at Van de Weyer's Drift, is cut up by deep escarpments and studded with ironstone hills, intersected by jagged edged dongas, all of a volcanic nature. The soil is, for the most part, a sandy orange dust. The hill sides are covered with rough thorn bushes and mimosa amongst which a considerable amount of good grass is apparent. The area is practically waterless at most times of the year, but the appearance of watercourses indicates the presence of large bodies of surface water during the rains. [134] [137]

Near the Uaso Nyiro lies the country known as Mosiro, level grass country, which affords permanent grazing for large herds of cattle all the year round on account of the proximity of the river and the consequent regular water supply.

To the east lies the country known as L'Odo Kilani, which is the northern extremity of the barren country round Lake Magadi.

The Uaso Nyiro, which is taken as the dividing line between the eastern and central portions of the Masai Reserve for the purposes of geographical description, flows into a swamp to the north of Lake Natron, which contains the lowest part of the reserve, being no more than 2,027 feet above sea level. The valley is fairly healthy in dry weather, but in the rainy season the inhabitants move westwards to the summit of the escarpment, which rises in a series of abrupt and rocky ridges on the right bank of the river from the Anglo-German boundary as far north as the Narosura River. The central portion.

West of this escarpment stand the Loita Hills, rugged masses extending over a wide area of country, watered by frequent streams, and of an altitude generally greater than 7,000 feet. These hills form the watershed of the tributaries of the Mara River, the chief of which in these parts is the Olkeju l'Ongaianet, which follows a course nearly parallel to the boundary and which enters the Mara River as it crosses the border. The Loita Hills present good grazing grounds, well supplied with water and grass, but they are too mountainous and rocky in places to be utilised to their full capacity.

North of the Narosura, and before reaching the Loita Plains, the Narosura Plains present grazing areas of the first quality, whose undulating slopes carry heavy crops of grass and are much frequented by Masai cattle. Permanent water is obtainable at regular intervals from the small tributaries of the Narosura.

The Loita Plains are entered at the Engare Ento and, though there is a deficiency of permanent water in this part, the grazing is otherwise good. The extensive areas comprised in the north-eastern portion of the Loita Plains consists of very open and bleak country, swept by cold winds, which send the temperature at night down to well below 40° F. and carrying a short close grass, which is more suitable for sheep than for cattle. The eastern boundary of the Plains is the Uaso Nyiro, which has not at this time entered into its deep ravine. At Van de Weyer's Drift the river is some twenty yards wide, running with a strong current between fairly high banks and of a depth varying at different seasons of the year, but rarely less than two or three feet deep at the drift. North of Narok Station the heights of the Mau rise through thick bush and forest country, well watered, but practically unusable for stock, to the top of the range and it is through this country that the Uaso Nyiro, with its tributaries, fall until they unite near the drift. [132]

West of the Narok lies the main portion of the Loita Plains, a vast area of open grass country, level, or slightly undulating, intersected with small watercourses, which hold water in the deeper cavities and in the neighbourhood of occasional springs at most seasons of the year, and dotted at intervals with copses of bush and scattered clumps of mimosa, a country which possesses magnificent possibilities as a grazing area if a few engineering projects are undertaken to

(3) Rainfall.

NAROK.

132

	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
January	—	0·03	4·20	9·44	2·86
February	—	1·48	5·09	3·23	0·28
March	—	4·37	5·10	4·40	0·05
April	3·03	6·16	4·53	8·59	—
May	5·82	4·21	6·35	3·29	—
June	0·27	0·62	0·62	5·92	—
July	1·05	0·10	0·00	1·74	—
August	2·33	0·23	1·09	1·97	—
September	0·75	0·26	3·41	0·51	—
October	0·00	0·16	1·66	2·16	—
November	0·00	2·35	0·19	1·60	—
December	0·13	2·24	1·03	0·00	—
Total	—	23·46	33·48	43·65	—

NGONG.

	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
January	—	0·00	3·40	4·86	1·03
February	—	0·30	1·31	4·48	0·08
March	—	4·33	4·82	0·05	0·11
April	5·29	9·89	10·90	14·09	—
May	7·22	5·25	4·06	6·80	—
June	0·19	1·96	1·22	3·06	—
July	0·43	0·00	0·00	0·47	—
August	0·44	0·00	0·87	2·40	—
September	0·65	0·48	3·20	1·36	—
October	2·60	2·96	1·15	2·68	—
November	3·15	2·67	3·95	0·24	—
December	0·15	0·45	3·17	0·00	—
Total	—	28·30	37·68	46·97	—

MARA RIVER.

	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
January	—	2·32	5·97	4·79
February	5·03	5·80	4·16	0·78
March	5·61	3·99	2·85	0·44
April	5·32	7·35	9·59	—
May	3·14	5·56	3·16	—
June	2·02	4·05	2·61	—
July	0·32	0·49	1·03	—
August	0·99	2·43	1·53	—
September	0·62	2·71	0·73	—
October	1·61	1·89	2·32	—
November	1·99	0·38	0·38	—
December	2·79	2·06	1·33	—
Total	—	43·30	47·73	—

6: Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

133 Let us take the country first.

The Masai country is very markedly divided into two quite distinct regions, the southerly or lower desert area and the northerly or plateau region. The southerly is comparatively low in altitude, that is to say, from 3000 to nearly 4000 feet. It is sterile and unproductive in the extreme. [132] This is owing, not to a barren soil, but to the scantiness of the rainfall, which for about three months in the year barely gives sufficient sustenance to scattered tufts of grass. The acacia and mimosa have almost sole possession of those dreary plains, except near the base of some isolated mountain, or other highland where small rivulets trickle down, to be speedily absorbed in the arid sands. No river traverses this region, and many parts are covered with incrustations of natron, left by the evaporation of salt-charged springs. We have seen something of this lower region in the flat reach of Njiri, and the forbidding desert of Dogilani.

It is not, however, to be conceived as a monotonous level. Far from it. The colossal Kilimanjaro, and the conical Mount Meru belong to it. The hills of Geléi and the Guaso N'Ebor circle round in the form of an amphitheatre, to meet the metamorphic masses of Ndapduk and Donyo Erok. Further to the west and north are the volcanic masses of Donyo Engăi, Donyo la Nyuki, and Donyo Logonot, with the hills of Nguruma-ni.

Except in the immediate vicinity of the higher mountains, such as Mount Meru and Donyo Engăi, the country is to a large extent uninhabited. To summarize this tract we may say that it is triangular in general shape, the apex towards the north, reaching to within thirty miles of the equator, and extending beyond to Baringo as a species of trough or deep, irregular cutting. The Masai are only to be found at all seasons about such favourable situations as the base of [361] Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru, Ndapduk, Geléi, Kisongo, to the west of Meru, Donyo Engăi, and along the edge of the plain at the bases of the bordering highlands Mau and Kaptè.

The country is sufficiently characterized when the fact is stated that it is a region of later volcanic activity, which in a very recent geological period has produced the cones and craters already referred to. These results of volcanic energy may, to some extent, be accounted for—though the statement may seem to savour of reasoning in a circle—by the lower region as an area of depression having subsided or sunk from the higher level of the flanking table-lands.

6: Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

decimation of the Masai of that part, through their intestine wars—a fact that has caused them to retreat from the northerly districts, which are in dangerous proximity to the Wa-sūk.

The Masai country, so called, may be said to include the area lying between 1° N. lat., and 5° S. In breadth it is very irregular; but if we say that the average is ninety miles, we shall be pretty near the truth. In this, however, we are including several isolated areas occupied either by tribes wholly different from the Masai, or by the agricultural Wakwafi, who are mere off-shoots of the Masai.

The rainfall is very small over the greater part of this large area. Only an approximate guess, of course, can be given—but I think I am within the mark in placing the rainfall of the lower desert region at fifteen inches, and the higher plateau areas at from thirty to forty inches in the year. During the fourteen months in which I travelled in that region my caravan was not caught ten times on the march by rain,—a striking contrast to my experience in the region further south, where, for weeks together, rain was incessant. The rains are almost entirely confined to February, March, and April. The consequence of this insignificant rainfall is, as we have seen, that the lower plains are practically desert, though the soil is of the richest nature. There are absolutely no marshes, with their physical discomforts and poisonous exhalations breeding disease and death. The air is dry and invigorating, and though the days are hot yet the breezes blow with refreshing coolness, and a night of low temperature—and even frequently of intense cold—braces one up for the fatigues of the garish day. The contrast, indeed, is felt to be just a little too great, when you rise, shivering, in the morning, to see the grass covered with hoar frost, and then in the afternoon find yourself perspiring in the airiest of costumes, under a shady bush, with the temperature above 90° Fahr. The air, however, being so dry, I felt no inconvenience from these abrupt changes, and it was simply wonderful to see how the men would lie in the open air without a shred of clothing, and with the temperature at the freezing-point.

At the high altitudes of this plateau region, hailstorms of very great violence are of frequent occurrence, more particularly in the neighbourhood of the Aberdare Mountains. More than once caravans have been overtaken by them while on the march, and great numbers of the men killed by the

6:Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

exposure; for the damp cold is singularly fatal to the coast natives, who, under its influence, drop down paralyzed, apparently utterly unable to make the slightest exertion to better themselves. On these occasions you may beat them with a stick till you are tired, but they will simply put their heads between their knees like an obstinate donkey, and whine out, "Si wezi," "Si wezi" (I am not able). On my return march at Mianzi-ni, to the east of Naivasha, one of these storms came on, accompanied with thunder and lightning of appalling fury and violence. The hail fell continuously for hours, and when it ceased the country was actually *white*, and remained so all night. If we had been caught out in that storm, without huts, I question very much if ten men would have survived. As it was, so utterly paralyzed were they that even in their huts they allowed their fires to go out, and they had literally to be compelled to bestir themselves.

So much for Masai Land. Let us now take up the deeply interesting subject of the inhabitants.

In dealing with the manners and customs of this remarkable race, I think I shall best picture them to the reader not by describing them in catalogue fashion, but by setting forth the prominent facts in the life history of a male and female Masai, tracing their career in the various epochs of their savage existence, and trying to understand their ideas of man and nature, and their sociological relations.

But first of all, let me say a few words more immediately descriptive of the Masai as a race. Learned philologists profess to have discovered from a study of the Masai language—and I suppose the theory may be accepted as correct—that it belongs to the Hamitic family, as does also the language spoken by the tribes of the Nile and North Africa. This seems to be the only clue to their family relationship, and it reveals very little. The reader, therefore, will clearly understand that the Masai are in no sense negroes, or allied to the Bantu tribes with which he is so familiar from the works of our most prominent later African travellers. In their cranial development, as in their language, they are widely different from the natives of Central and South Africa, occupying in the former respect a far higher position in the scale of humanity.

The Masai tribe is divided into about twelve principal clans or sub-tribes, with numerous smaller divisions. These have not all the same position in Masai society, some clans having more "blue" blood, and being reckoned of purer

6: Thomson K-3 (1883-1884) 1887
FL12 Masai FL12.
Wa-Kwafi

between the married and the unmarried people, very little work being expected of the latter, and the sweetheart system being preserved. They all, however, occupy the same village, and of course the young men cannot afford to live on meat, though they always come in for the lion's share when any of it is going. When parties go off on war-raids, they also contrive to eat a bullock by way of getting up their courage.

They lead upon the whole a very miserable life, ever threatened with destruction by the Masai, who have swept off several villages and all their cattle. The soil being the very richest loam, brought down from the mountains and spread over a comparatively level plain to the south of the lake, it is capable of producing anything; only the extreme dryness of the air and the very small annual rainfall, confined to a couple of months, keeps it sterile and barren. To ameliorate this unhappy condition of things the Wa-kwafi have developed a wonderfully ingenious system of irrigation by artificial canals of (for them) great magnitude. They construct dams across the deep channel of the Guaso Ngiriah and thus raise the level of the water to that of the plain, and then, by an intricate network of channels, they spread the precious fluid over a large area, and raise their millet and melons. These products form almost their sole food, eked out by what they are able to kill in the chase and by fish from the river, though when meat is scarce they are not disdainful even of rats. Of these there were simply myriads. They swarmed everywhere, and nothing was too sacred for them. Need it be wondered if "oft in the stilly night" were heard imprecations loud and deep upon the wretched pests when I have been wakened up by my nose being bitten or the sanctity of my toe invaded. My books were devoured, and even the bullets in my cartridges were not too indigestible. Everything, indeed, had to be kept under iron or hung up under sheds as represented on page 313.

As in the case of the Wa-taveta, the Wa-njampe are singularly honest and reliable, so much so that valuable goods and equally valuable food are left in their charge with the utmost confidence, and I have heard of no case of this being violated. To me, one of the most remarkable features in the character of the young women and girls was their absolute unconsciousness of fear in my presence, and the complete confidence they seemed to have in me. They indeed took

7: Hailey G-4 (No date) 1950 FL12 Masai FL12

[pages preceding p. 167 not processed]

SECTION VII

THE MASAI EXTRA PROVINCIAL DISTRICT

GENERAL NOTE

MASAILAND constitutes an Extra Provincial District under an Officer in Charge, holding the powers of a Provincial Commissioner, with two District Commissioners, stationed at Kajiado and Narok. The legislation in force in other parts of the Colony applies to the District, but the Outlying District Ordinance, No. 23 of 1902, has also been applied to it, in order to provide a means for controlling immigration from other tribes, a matter to which, as will be subsequently shown, much importance is attached by Masai tribesmen. The area of the District is 15,177 square miles and the population was estimated in 1945 at 53,000.[1] The density is thus 3·4 per square mile.

The Masai District contains in its more northern section a considerable neighbouring Highlands reserved for European use, though it is to be noted that the rainfall here is more variable than in the central part of the Highlands. The lower parts of the District have a lower and even more variable rainfall, with the result that there is an area, conservatively estimated at a little over 5,000 square miles, which is arid and for all practical purposes waterless.[2] But the value of the large area held by the Masai is not to be judged by its agricultural possibilities, for if the Masai no longer justify the character assigned to them by history as "a virile tribe of predatory nomads," they have at all events maintained their traditional habit of life as a pastoral people, and though there is some cultivation in the Naivasha-Ngare area and also near Ngong, this forms only an infinitesimal part of the District, and is for the most part carried out by Kikuyu immigrants on behalf of the local Masai.

It is of interest to note that in 1904 the number of cattle was estimated at only 300,000 and the sheep and goats at 600,000. This may have been an underestimate, though it must be realized that the country was still in some extent suffering from the effects of the great rinderpest epidemic of 1890, which had entailed such catastrophic results both on the numbers and the military power of the Masai. By 1914 the estimates had gone up to 600,000 head of cattle and over a million and half sheep and goats.[3] The Masai herds suffered severely in the drought of 1933 and 1934, when their losses of cattle were estimated at over a quarter of a million. But a recent estimate has put the number of cattle at over 700,000, with 800,000 sheep and a large number of donkeys. The further increase in the number of cattle is to some extent affected by the existence of fly, which is prevalent on the South Kavirondo boundary, in the extreme west, and also in the middle area, where the Kajiado and Narok Districts join. But if the present estimate of the stock is correct,

[1] Kenya Colony Blue Book, 1948, page 170.

[2] There is a summary of the physical conditions of the district by L. Jones at page 26 of Africa, January, 1939, together with a useful bibliography.

[3] Administrative and Political History of the Masai Reserve, C. R. Goodfield, 1918, page 9.

/130 cont./

905 The 10th day, as tomon ogwen, as the final day of the first decade.

The 15th day, as ol gudet and final day of the eig eber ol ehe.

[777] The 16th day, as ol enjat: it is the unlucky day for war and the initial day of en aimen (= the darkness).

[777] [784] The 17th day, as ol enjagi: it is the most important unlucky day in daily life, but on the other hand, is regarded as a lucky day in war: on the ol enjagi people do not change dwellings, do not shave their heads, and do not undertake any circumcision.

The 18th day to 20th day, as en mikiala.

The 21th day, as en ekilmolk, on which the boys belonging to the El kiboshi lineage are circumcised, and as the final day of the second decade.

The 21st day to 23rd day, as ngolo.

[784] The 24th day, as initial day of the en aimen ngank: on it no sacrifices may be offered, and frequently too, just as on the subsequent en aimen ngank days, no circumcision is to take place.

The following days up to the end of the month, as en aimen ngank.

Within these days, the 4th, 10th, 17th, 24th, and 1st are again especially familiar.

905 821 • 132 These months form a season: four seasons, the year (ol ol). The names of the seasons are

Ol dumerik, that is, the time of little rainfall, which precedes the great rainy season. This falls in the ol gukwa, named after the Plejaden, which then rise low on the western horizon.

/141/ Then follows the ol aimoljorod, the season of the lighter after-rains, and then the ol ormik, the period of hunger, of drought.

The months of ol dumerik are: 1. ol gimoo, in which the goats and sheep bring forth young: 2. ol mikila, that is, the heat of the sun: 3. ol gukwa.

The months of en gukwa are: 1. le ayak, formed from ar rata- green valley. The rain, which has fallen meagerly up to now, has been sufficient to cover with fresh green the valleys and deeper lying places in the otherwise still yellow, dry steppe. 2. en aroimoo, the dark, gloomy one. The sky is cloudy, it rains a great deal, the days are gloomy and dark. 3. ol lorlorua, formed from aomori = fat: the cattle soon become fat because of the young, fresh grass.

/160 cont./

805 The months of the ol airodjerod are: 1. le logunja airodjerod,
821 also called oiñni oinok, that is, the tied-up bulls. As a result of the
• 132 rich fodder of the recent months, they have become wild; in the pasture they would be constantly fighting with one another, hence they are separated. 2. bolos (= middle) airodjerod, or also, but more rarely, called ol dit. 3. kudjoruk, that is, cold; cool weather distinguishes this month.

805 The ol amgil starts with the month kiber, that is, noise and
821 strife. The pasture is sparse and as a consequence the cows give too
132 little milk to satisfy all the people. Everyone tries to appropriate
261 for himself some of the milk from the livestock of others, through
262 which strife and brawls arise. Finally the milk no longer extends
[578] to necessitous satiation, and the majority of the warriors with a few cattle move into the forest for meat eating, which usually lasts not only through the entire month, but also even over the next month of ol dongos or ol dolos or ol dolgoach, since even then the milk is still very scant. The name seems to be formed from the word eh gaechusch = food scarcity. Not until the beginning of the third month, of the boschogge, do they return to the kraals. From the
[276] abundant meat meals they feel very strong, and the heavy use of nerve-stimulating roots has affected their nerves to a high degree, and almost daily one or another has a fit of rage (1).

1. Cf. XIX. Nerve Ailments.

805 The Masai do not count years. Rather, they designate the year after the event seeming to them the most important one that happened during it, for example, after a livestock epidemic, a drought, the death of the high chief, a war expedition especially rich in spoils, etc. (2).

[171] 2. Just as the Babylonians, even in the 3rd millennium B.C., did not count the years, but gave each year a name after an outstanding event in it, especially after the deeds of the king. One proceeded similarly

(82 177 372 (182) easier to light more fires are lit, just as in the case of hunting tribes who have received firearms; with game easier to kill, more game is killed. Control in these matters appears to be enforced by availability of tools and difficulty of accomplishment, not by any conservation ethic.

132 We questioned Masai, other Africans, and Europeans about lightning fires and never found the slightest evidence of lightning causing fires in the savanna country. There is no doubt that it ignites some fires in [illegible] rim-rock or mountain areas, but we never even saw a lightning-struck tree in the study area. All the lightning we observed in storms was high, it occurred in heavy rain storms, or it was low in the region of Lake Victoria.

182 232 324 233 There does not seem to be any discipline or organization to the burning by the Masai. Fires are started in dry grass when herds leave an area, but they are also lit when herds arrive in an area. If the grass is dry enough. They are even lit in pauses during rain storms.

The forest country on the hills is also burned at

• 132

[For information on type of climate, see category 116, pp. 61-87, and 301.]